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# THE BOOK OF THE MONTH

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## ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE<sup>1</sup>

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The importance of biblical archaeology has come to be in a measure realized only within the last few years. Archaeology is now a term bandied back and forth between opposing schools of criticism, each claiming the support of this science for his own views. It is a familiar fact that the Palestine Exploration Fund undertook its work of excavation and exploration with the distinct expectation of obtaining such results as would confirm the accepted views regarding the Bible. Much to the surprise and disappointment of those supporting such enterprises, the finds of archaeology have cut both ways. There is no question but that archaeological science has contributed much to our confidence in the trustworthiness of the biblical records. It is equally true, however, that it has contributed quite as much toward compelling us to revise our interpretation of those records. There is therefore no field of biblical investigation in which the employment of adequate scholarship and wise judgment is more necessary.

Professor Barton has a very large proportion of the qualifications necessary to the writing of a good book on biblical archaeology. There are few scholars better equipped. He has behind him a long period of experience as a teacher of both Old and New Testament interpretation. He is a scholar of first rank in the field of Assyrian and Babylonian research. He spent one year in Jerusalem as director of the American School of Archaeology, thus having had

abundant opportunity to familiarize himself with the land and the people. He has published numerous volumes attesting his scholarship both in the field of general Semitics and in the narrower field of Old Testament research in particular.

The task Professor Barton sets himself to perform in this volume is one of great difficulty. He has endeavored to remain entirely neutral in territory where a bitter conflict is raging. He seeks so far as possible to present the archaeological data and to allow them to speak for themselves. Where he does cite opinion he is careful to give both sides so that the reader may make his choice. Only rarely does he express his own opinion. Sometimes indeed this expression of his personal opinion is upon points where it might have been better to keep still. For example, Professor Barton accepts the hypothesis of two invasions of Sennacherib. Likewise he sets himself forcefully against the acceptance of Gen., chap. 14, as history, and against the identification of the names of the kings there cited with any known monarchs of the ancient world. Such opinions as these, good enough in and of themselves, are probably to be regarded as safety-valves, giving relief from the strain of an oppressive neutrality. It goes without saying that Professor Barton, in his endeavor to offend nobody, will entirely satisfy nobody. The reviewer, for example, can hardly be pleased with the author's complete silence regarding the light cast by excavation upon our

<sup>1</sup> *Archaeology and the Bible*, By George A. Barton. Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1916. Pp. xiii+461+114 plates. \$2.00.

understanding of the conquest of Canaan. It is now almost a commonplace that the civilization of Palestine, as revealed by the spade, leaves no room for the theory of a sudden or speedy conquest. Nor does he tell his readers that the walls of Canaanitish Jericho show no sign of ever having been entirely overthrown. Nevertheless the book he has given us is a very valuable addition to the literature of interpretation. There is here gathered together a mass of material covering a very wide range of territory and not to be found in any other single volume in the English language. Furthermore, it is a distinct gain to have a work which can be heartily recommended to the most conservative type of reader, with the assurance that he will not be driven away from it by the author's obtrusive opinions and that he will find here, probably for the first time, the plain, unvarnished facts unaccompanied by any efforts to color their meaning.

The book falls into three parts. The first part is primarily geographical and historical. Here and throughout the book the author confines himself to the materials revealed by excavation. The volume therefore does not give us an archaeology of the Bible in the larger sense of the word. The second part of the book contains twenty-seven chapters which present the inscriptional material illustrating the Bible. The translations are for the most part the author's own and represent the latest achievements in scholarship; when the work of others has been used, only renderings of the highest value have been chosen. The third part consists of 114 excellently prepared plates presenting a total of 301 figures and 6 maps. The whole constitutes an invaluable collec-

tion of materials and deserves a place in every Bible student's library.

A few corrections may here be noted for the second edition which is sure to be demanded. Page 380 and elsewhere: *l. Koldewey*. Pages 62 and 386: it is not quite correct to say that Tiglath Pileser IV invented the policy of deportations. As a matter of fact it goes back quite as far as the days of Tiglath Pileser I. Tiglath Pileser IV expanded the policy and supplemented it by making an interchange of peoples. Page 88: *l. Domaszewski*. Page 96: *l. Steuernagel*. Pages 120, 123, and 227: *l. Antigonus*. Page 141 and page 146, in the title of Vincent's book: *l. recente*. Page 145: *l. stratum*. Page 151 at bottom: *l. Eliakim*. Page 161: the interpretation of I Sam. 13:20-21, here accredited to Professor Margolis, was first published by Pilcher in the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, 1914, p. 99. Pages 261 and 303: *l. Thontafelfund*. Page 266 in note 2: *l. isten*. Page 268: the last line needs rectification. Page 378: *l. Arvad*. The story of Hittite decipherment has continued since this book was put into type, and must now be supplemented by reference to the work of Hrozný, the first announcement of which appeared in a recent number of the *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* and heralded the greatest step forward thus far.

It is interesting and encouraging to the editors and readers of the *Biblical World* to note how frequently reference is made to the pages of this journal. The *Biblical World* has been one of the efficient educators of public sentiment along these lines.